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## NEW BOOKS REVIEWED

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1914. By Field-Marshal Viscount French. Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Although Marshal French disclaims any intention of writing a history, in the sense, even, of a complete account of the military operations on the Western Front during 1914, his book is, of course, an integral part of the history of the war, and it possesses the detailed accuracy and the breadth of view requisite in good historical writing. A day-to-day record of what the British expeditionary force did and suffered in the first year of the war, the narrative clearly outlines every strategic situation, describes every movement, and tells the part taken in each by particular forces. A reader desirous of minute military knowledge, may with the aid of the several maps with which the volume is supplied determine exactly where the British forces were and what they were doing on any day in 1914. The great movements of this momentous year—the retreat from Mons, the Battle of the Marne, the Battle of the Aisne, with the results of the siege of Antwerp and the northern movement of the Allied forces; finally, the ever memorable Battle of Ypres—all these are described with a lucidity and completeness which give one an exceptionally clear idea of the work actually performed by the officers and men of the heroic British Expeditionary Force.

But it is not merely as a minutely accurate description of military operations or as a sober and realistic testimony to the gallantry and steadfastness of British soldiers that the book is historical. "My main object in writing this record," declares the author, "is to explain as clearly as possible to my countrymen the line of thought which was in my own mind, the objects I set out to attain, and the reasons why I directed the troops as I did and came to the decisions at which I arrived at each successive phase of the operations." The volume "1914," is thus the account which Marshal French renders to the British people. This account is given in a manner frank and soldierlike, modest, impersonal; good-humored, but decisive; and marked by a fine enthusiasm for the soldierlike qualities in others. The narrative includes perforce, as falling within the sphere of the author's professional judgment, matters of the utmost importance in forming a correct conception of the war as a whole—of the factors that helped to save civilization and those which endangered it.

Through the perusal of this book two ideas are stamped upon the

mind by the authority of powerful, thoroughly informed, and manifestly impartial reasoning. The first of these is the immense importance of the independent rôle of the British army in France during the first year of the war, as illustrated by the weight of the decisions that devolved upon its Commander. The second is the danger of divided councils, as illustrated by Lord Kitchener's interferences with the conduct of the campaign, by the story of the struggle to obtain munitions, and by the disregard of Marshal French's plan to seize the Belgian coast line as far as Zeebrugge.

On August 24, during the retreat from Mons, information reached Marshal French of the defeat and retreat of the Third French Army and the continual falling back of General Lanrezac. The force opposite him was growing in numbers, and he judged it to be more than double his own. It was clear that he could not stand on the line towards which his troops were retiring. "The fortress of Maubeuge," writes the author, "lay close on my right rear. It was well fortified and provisioned. It is impossible for any one who has not been situated as I was to realize the terrible temptation which such a place offers to an army seeking shelter against overpowering odds." But Marshal French, bearing in mind the blunder of Bazaine at Metz, decided not to emulate the conduct of "one who, when the ship is foundering, should lay hold of the anchor." Leaving Maubeuge aside, he directed a retreat some miles further back to the line Le Chateau-Cambrai.

On the 25th, after a hard march, the First Corps of the British Army, commanded by Sir Douglas Haig, was attacked at Landrecies before it could get any rest at all. Sir Douglas, however, gauged the enemy's design, which was to impose upon the British the idea that he was in great strength and to pin their troops to the ground while his flanking movement became effective. With a precisely similar purpose, troops were pushed forward against the Second Corps at Le Chateau. Had the German plan succeeded, this Corps would have been pinned down and surrounded; three out of five divisions of the British Army with the Seventh Brigade must have been lost; "the enemy, continuing his combined front and flank attack, would have almost certainly pushed the whole Allied Army off their line of retreat, and a stupendous repetition of Sedan might well have resulted."

The British Army, it must be remembered, was at this time acting as an independent unit, and the common line of action had to be concerted, so far as practicable, between the commanders of the two Allied Armies. On August 29th, General Joffre, learning that the enemy had detached a considerable force to defend his eastern frontier, was naturally anxious to take the offensive at the earliest possible moment. Marshal French, however, remained firm in his conviction that the British forces could not take part in any forward movement for some days—that further retreat was for them inevitable. He also urged upon Joffre the advantage of drawing the Germans still further from their base—the final stand, he thought, should be made on some line between the Marne and the Seine. Marshal French has, therefore, his part in that strategy which afterwards proved successful, while his insistence upon his own point of view regarding the feasibility of attack prevented what easily might have proved a costly mistake.

At the same time the promise he had made to Joffre, to continue to fill up the gap between the Fifth and Sixth French armies, had to be carried out in the face of resistance from some of his subordinate commanders. In particular, "Sir Horace Smith-Dorrien gave it as his opinion that the only course open to us was to retire to our base, thoroughly refit, re-embark, and try to land at some favorable point on the coast-line. I refused to listen," says Marshal French, "to what was the equivalent of a counsel of despair."

On the 31st, demands already made that the British Army should stand and fight were urgently repeated, and this time they were actually supported by imperative messages from the French President and from Lord Kitchener and the British Government. At the same time General Lanrezac was widening the gap between his own army and the British, while "Lord Kitchener was assuring the Home Government that the British losses were comparatively small, and that all losses had been made good." Marshal French understood the extreme danger of the situation. As yet he had not received a single man, gun, or horse, with which to make good deficiencies. In fact, it would appear that at this juncture the decision of the British general alone stood between the Allies and defeat. One can hardly suppose that the author speaks idly or in a boastful spirit when he says: "I retain the most profound belief that, had I yielded to these violent solicitations, the whole Allied Army would have been thrown back in disorder over the Marne, and Paris would have fallen an easy prey into the hands of the Germans."

The result of Marshal French's refusal was the visit of Lord Kitchener to Paris—an unfortunate occurrence, which drew the Commanding General from the field at a critical moment and tended to weaken his authority in the eyes of his own troops and in the estimation of the French Ministers and generals. It is noteworthy that in dealing with this matter of the dictation attempted by Lord Kitchener as Secretary of State for War, the author shows not only entire fairness but a complete absence of bitterness and a deep respect for the military qualities and the private virtues of the official with whom he was at odds. Kitchener appears to have been a man who could realize and admit his own mistakes. But great as were his talents for command, Kitchener as Commander-in-Chief in France would have been helped very much, as Marshal French told the House of Lords in 1916, if he had had "a Secretary of State *other than himself* to deal with." And there appears to be justice in the comparison which the author draws between his own relations with Kitchener and those of McClellan with Stanton during our Civil War.

Marshal French was one of the first to be impressed with the importance to England of the Channel ports in the event of war with a continental Power. Shortly before the war, he wrote a paper on this subject for circulation among the members of the Committee for Imperial Defense. By September 16, 1914, he had come to the conclusion that there was nothing to prevent the enemy from launching a powerful attack to gain these ports while the main forces on each side were practically neutralizing each other. From that time on, he sent constant and urgent warnings upon this subject to London. Had his

advice been followed as to the employment of the troops sent to relieve Antwerp, it seems possible that Ostend and even Zeebrugge might have been secured, while it is certain that these troops might have been saved that dangerous and exhausting flank march, costing terrible loss, by which alone they were able to join the main British forces.

Marshal French's prevision was justified, for, as the story of the fighting and the author's analysis of possible results plainly show, the great battle of Ypres was for England a life-and-death struggle so doubtful that one is fain to shudder at thought of the hazard, though past. On October 31 and November 1, "no more than one thin straggling line of tired-out British soldiers stood between the Empire and its practical ruin as an independent, first-class Power."

It will be seen that the author not only shows in convincing fashion the work actually done by the British Army, and explains his own conduct in connection with that work, but that he also, in referring to the attempted relief of Antwerp and the bearing of this upon the fate of the Channel ports, advances upon controversial ground. Responsible criticism of this sort is, of course, of great value. Scarcely second in importance to the question of how the war was actually won is the question of whether it might not have been won sooner.

The British Government at this time—always with the exception of Winston Churchill—was becoming obsessed with the notion that the war on the Western Front was destined to result in a condition of stalemate, and that the part of wisdom would be to attempt operations in "other theatres." The author's analysis of this idea of "other theatres" appears conclusive so far at least as the years 1914 and 1915 are concerned. "I remain absolutely convinced," writes Marshal French, "that my plan should have been accepted and tried." With his intimate knowledge of conditions and his realistic appreciation of the whole military situation, the Commander-in-Chief in France could see in 1914 that the effort to carry on war in more than one theatre "could only result in what actually happened in 1915; namely, the series of feeble and on the whole unsuccessful attempts to break through the German line in France, and an absolute failure, compelling ultimate withdrawal of our troops, in the Dardanelles."

Scarcely controversial is the author's account of his desperate efforts to obtain an adequate supply of munitions and especially of high-explosive shells. Marshal French's official correspondence with the War Office on this subject began in the latter part of September, 1914, and continued right up to June, 1915, at which time he was constrained to take unprecedented and very drastic measures, as fully detailed in Chapter XVIII. of his book. The whole story, though obviously true, would seem antecedently incredible, and it contains a weighty lesson for any government that may hereafter be obliged to conduct a great war.

So truly impersonal is Marshal French throughout the whole course of his treatise, so well does he keep within the bounds of the reasonably demonstrable, observing always that real and instinctive decorum which is generally the sign of right reason, that one can

scarcely suppose that any of his important conclusions will be seriously weakened by later historic criticism.

PRESENT PROBLEMS IN FOREIGN POLICY. By David Jayne Hill. New York: D. Appleton and Company.

If the League of Nations is, as to not a few Americans it seems, at best a Utopian scheme, then it is true by the same token, that the persuasive arguments urged in its favor cannot be refuted except by the most thorough analysis. The League is peculiarly a matter concerning which it is possible to hold much argument without arriving at a clear conclusion. Being Utopian, it resembles a philosophy, and seems, as almost all philosophies do, highly plausible and satisfying until one begins to question its first principles. First principles are extremely abstract; they are easily hidden from view, as the whole history of philosophy-making and of political theorizing goes to show; and it requires the full power of the Socratic dialectic—that analytical power which appears to be much needed and much neglected in this day—to bring them to light when they have once been allowed to fall into obscurity.

So far as the theory of government is concerned, no one is more notable for the use of this power of fundamentally clear analysis than is David Jayne Hill. The effect of the mental reagent which Dr. Hill applies to one's somewhat confused thinking about the possibility of permanent peace is to cause the separation of the two ideas of law and of an *imperium* or supernational entity.

The distinction, though it seems obvious enough when stated in words, is sufficiently fine to be readily lost sight of. It is easy to confound the idea of law with the notion of government as enforcing the law, and to forget that the ultimate source of law is in men's minds and hearts; that a plan which tries to substitute machinery for conviction is not a means of safety but a menace.

We have the Entente of Free Nations. It was this Entente that won the war. Such an understanding for the support of law as has already come into existence between the great free nations of the world expresses the exact state of enlightened public opinion. There is no real disposition to give up any part of the principle of nationality; indeed, a part cannot be given up without surrender of the principle. "By whatever name it is called, there is no third condition between super-government and the independence of free peoples. And the free nations do not desire a super-government. There remains, therefore, no possibility but an Entente of Free Nations, however it be named, and our one solicitude should be that it be not destroyed."

What form would the great understanding between free nations take? Dr. Hill has outlined such an agreement in the simplest manner:

"We, the signatories, agree that, if peace should be anywhere threatened, we will together inquire into the cause of aggression; and if we find that the Law of Nations has been anywhere violated, we will, by mediation, together use our best endeavors to avoid strife. If war is begun, we will together consider what measures we should take in common. And we mutually agree to submit any difference we may